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Message Text

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ACTION AF-10

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 IO-13 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05
H-01 INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 SP-02
SS-15 ICA-11 COME-00 EB-08 LAB-04 SIL-01 /102 W
----------074458 040522Z /13 10
R 031307Z AUG 78
FM AMEMBASSY LAGOS
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 9860
INFO AMEMBASSY ADDIS ABABA
AMEMBASSY BRUSSELS
AMEMBASSY MOSCOW
AMCONSUL KADUNA
USMISSION GENEVA

C O N F I D E N T I A L LAGOS 9617

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: ELAB, PINT, NI, UR
SUBJECT: NIGERIAN LABOR CONGRESS THREATENS STRIKE

REF: LAGOS 2899

1. A DELEGATION FROM THE NIGERIA LABOR CONGRESS (NLC), LED BY PRESIDENT H.A. SUNMONU, MET WITH SECRETARY TO THE FEDERAL MILITARY GOVERNMENT (FMG) A.L. CIROMA, DIRECTOR LABOR G.C. OKOGWU AND TRADE UNION ADVISER ASSAM ODUNGIDE ON JULY 19 TO THE PRESENT THEIR GRIEVANCES OVER THE FMG'S FAILURE TO AUTHORIZE FUNDING FOR THE NLC. NLC LEADERS COMPLAINED TO CIROMA THEY ARE UNABLE TO SET UP A SECRETARIAT AND PAY SALARIES OF OFFICIALS WHO STARTED WORKING AS OF JULY 1. AS THE GOVERNMENT HAS NOT YET ISSUED CERTIFICATES OF REGISTRATION TO THE NEW INDUSTRIAL UNIONS, NO DUES CAN BE COLLECTED FROM THEM. FURTHERMORE, NO AUTHORIZATION HAS BEEN
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GIVEN FOR COMPULSORY DUES CHECK-OFF.

2. CIROMA TOLD THE NLC LEADERS THAT HE WOULD PRESENT THEIR GRIEVANCES TO THE FMG BUT WARNED THEM TO DESIST FROM STRIKE ACTION OR ANY OTHER DISRUPTIVE TACTICA. CIROMA PROMISED TO CONVEY FMG DECISIONS TO THE LABOR LEADERS "VERY SOON."

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3. ON JULY 31, ANOTHER NLC DELEGATION MET WITH DIRECTOR OF LABOR OKOGWU AND ASKED HIM TO TRANSMIT A LETTER REQUESTING A MEETING ON THE SUBJECT TO CHIEF OF STAFF YAR'ADUA. NO DATE HAS YET BEEN FIXED FOR SUCH A MEETING.

4. COMMENT: IMMEDIATELY AFTER THE JULY 19 MEETING, SUNMONU TOLD EMBASSY POLITICAL/LABOR ASSISTANT THAT THE NLC WILL "SURPRISE THE GOVERNMENT" IF IT FAILS TO RESPOND WITHIN A MONTH. ASKED WHAT HE MEANT, SUNMONU SAID THE NLC WILL CALL A STRIKE BY THE ELECTRIC, ROAD TRANSPORT AND AIR INDUSTRIES UNIONS "TO TEST THE STRENGTH OF THE NLC AGAINST THE FMG." THE AUTHOR OF THIS STRATEGY IS REPORTEDLY WAHAB GOODLUCK, FORMER PRESIDENT OF THE NIGERIAN TRADE UNION CONGRESS (NTUC) WHO WAS BANNED BY THE FMG FROM PARTICIPATION IN THE NIGERIAN LABOR MOVEMENT FOLLOWING THE "ADEBIYI PROBE." GOODLUCK IS ALSO THE FORMER GENERAL SECRETARY OF SUNMONU'S CIVIL SERVICE TECHNICAL WORKERS' UNION.

5. ACCORDING TO DIRECTOR OF LABOR OKOGWU, THE GOVERNMENT
SIS RELUCTANT TO RELEASE FUNDS FOR THE
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NLC FOLLOWING PERSISTENT REPORTS THAT SUNMONU AND THE TWO NLC DEPUTY GENERAL SECRETARIES, BEN OBUA AND LASISI OSUNDE, ARE ENGAGED IN UNDERGROUND POLITICAL ACTIVITIES WITH GOODLUCK WHO INTENDS TO RUN FOR PARLIAMENT AS A CANDIDATE OF THE RESURRECTED NIGERIAN LABOR PARTY. OKOGWU SAID THAT THE SECURITY UNIT OF THE CABINET OFFICE IS INVESTIGATING WHETHER NLC LEADERS HAVE BEEN RECEIVING FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE FROM THE ALL-UNION CENTRAL COUNCIL OF TRADE UNIONS OF THE SOVIET UNION (AUCCTU) THROUGH THE SOVIET EMBASSY. IF IT IS ESTABLISHED THAT THE AUCCTU INDEED IS FUNDING THE NLC, THE GOVERNMENT WILL CUT ITS PROMISED FINANCIAL SUPPORT TO THE NLC BY 50 PERCENT, PLACE THE NLC LEADERS UNDER SURVEILLANCE AND RESTRICT THEIR MOVEMENTS.
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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 jan 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: LABOR UNIONS, LABOR STRIKES
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 03 aug 1978
Decaption Date: 01 jan 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 20 Mar 2014
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1978LAGOS09617
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
Film Number: D780320-0623
Format: TEL
From: LAGOS
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1978/newtext/t197808103/aaaadijz.tel
Line Count: 110
Litigation Code IDs:
Litigation Codes:
Litigation History:
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Message ID: 10180358-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Office: ACTION AF
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 3
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: 78 LAGOS 2899
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 03 may 2005
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 1549782
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: NIGERIAN LABOR CONGRESS THREATENS STRIKE
TAGS: ELAB, PINT, NI, UR
To: STATE
Type: TE
vdkvgwkey: odbc://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/10180358-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
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Markings: Sheryl P. Walter Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 20 Mar 2014